

How to ignite the spark?

Understanding alternative and diverse forms of participation in democratic life
& empowering multipliers to support them

3 Participation Labs

Call for 3 researchers/experts on youth participation

1. Context & aims:

Under the impact of the actual challenges facing Europe there seems to be various perspectives on how participation, a sense of citizenship and democratic values need to be further developed today. Current research shows that young people tend to participate rather in non-traditional forms and different examples can be found all over Europe where young people do get involved if their interests and needs are directly addressed.

Across Europe the understanding of what participation actually is differs – mainly at the divide between social, civic and political participation. In the framework of this project stands the assumption that all three forms are interrelated, leading to a greater democratic participation and active citizenship. This reflective process is at the core of this project.

This long-term project aims at:

- Contributing to a better understanding of alternative and diverse forms of participation in democratic life;
- Promoting their value for a vivid and contentious democracy under development;
- Bridging the ability to articulate an individual interest to an ability to articulate a common interest with others;
- Reflecting on the learning of participation as a way to inspire critical citizens;
- Enabling multipliers to empower young people to take an active role in democratic society.

The project has a core interest to strengthen participation for groups and in fields which are normally underrepresented and having less access to forms of influencing their living environment, such as young refugees and migrants, people of black and ethnic minority background (BME), NEETs, young apprentices, trainees and workers, young people in vocational training centers, schools or non-formal settings such as youth initiatives.

2. Implementation:

The project will consist of two formats (including a preparatory and an evaluation meetings):

- a. **1 Prep meeting** (2 working days, 4 – 5 stakeholders, 4 trainers and 1 rapporteur, 3 researchers/experts) to prepare and further narrow the topic of the
- b. **3 Participation Labs** (2,5 working days, 25 – 30 participants; good mixture of field experts, researchers, practitioners, trainers, political educators and other multipliers) to bring together experts to explore a current challenge, find out what the burning questions are, existing knowledge and models of practice. This might prepare the topic for one or more training courses.
- c. **Training Course(s)** (duration and content to be discussed during the Labs) to promote methodology, knowledge and good practice for other stakeholders and multipliers.
- d. **Evaluation meeting** (to be organized at the end of the project, after the training courses) to evaluate the outcomes of the over-all project and decide on the follow-up.

During 2 years (2016 and 2017) there will be 3 Participation Labs with only one prep-meeting, possibly 1 or more Training Courses with prior prep meetings and one evaluation meeting at the end.

3. Topics for the Participation Labs:

- a. **How to give underrepresented target groups a voice? *(to take place in Germany, from 16 to 18 November 2016)***
 - Empowering underrepresented groups for participation in democratic life;
 - Including these target groups as subjects, not as objects;
 - Reflecting on the role of youth workers, educators and multipliers in this process.
- b. **Democratic participation in the transition from education to employment *(to take place in the UK, in the first half of 2017, dates to be confirmed by autumn 2016)***
 - Giving students, young employees, young entrepreneurs, trainees, apprentices, NEETs, young people in precarious work situations etc. a voice;
 - Striking a balance between individualization and contributing to a common interest.
 - Reflecting on the role of youth workers, educators and multipliers in this process.
- c. **What is the field of political/civic/social education? *(to take place in Sweden, in the second half of 2017, dates to be confirmed by autumn 2016)***
 - Should political/civic/social education create a space for empowerment for political action (in diverse forms of participation in democratic life) or is the process of information and simulation enough?
 - What is the role of youth workers, educators and multipliers in this process?

4. Organizers and Partners:

The Erasmus+ Youth in Action National Agencies of Germany, UK, Sweden and Hungary, SALTO-YOUTH Participation Resource Centre and the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth

5. Call for 3 researchers/experts

JUGEND für Europa, the German “Erasmus+” National Agency, is looking for three researchers/experts on the three thematic fields covered by the participation labs (one per topic and per lab). Their task is to deliver a short inspirational/informative paper on the topic (5 – 10 pages) and to give an input during the participation labs. Their contribution will enable the participants to lead knowledge-based discussions reflecting the state-of-the-art of the specific topic of the lab.

Profile of the researcher/expert:

- With knowledge about and experience in working on the topic of youth participation in general, and with in-depth knowledge of the topic of the participation lab that he/she will cover;
- Able to break down theoretical knowledge into comprehensive and concise writing;
- Used to cooperating with stakeholders from different professional, political and cultural backgrounds;
- Excellent command of English;
- He/she needs to be available for the preparatory meeting that will take place in Budapest on 1st – 4th of September 2016 (2 full day meeting plus travel) and for the participation lab that he/she will cover

Fees:

It is foreseen to provide a fee of 290 € per working day. 8 working days (including participation in the prep-meeting, preparation of an inspirational/informative paper, input delivery during the lab, participation in the lab and possibly making changes to the paper after the discussions at the lab) are planned for each lab -> **2.320 € per person.**

Applications:

Applicants should send a **CV including information about their experiences in/ knowledge of the field of youth participation and the specific topic of the lab they apply for.** The applicants should provide a motivation letter and a **sample of a recent writing or link(s) to research/publications (developed individually or co-authored) covering the topic of youth participation and/or the specific one they apply for.**

Interested experts are invited to send their application by **28 July 2016, 24h00** to: Jochen Butt-Pošník at butt-posnik@jfemail.de. Please cc Raluca Diroescu - raluca@salto-youth.net.

6. Further questions?

Please don't hesitate to contact:

Jochen Butt-Pošník

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